

(Washington, DC)— Congresswoman Gwen Moore (D-Wisc.) today recognized the 15th anniversary of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) by speaking on the floor of the House of Representatives about the importance of the historic legislation, which created a safe haven for families affected by domestic violence. Because of the provisions included in VAWA in 1994, domestic violence victims have been able to access services and counseling during their darkest hours, emergency and transitional shelters in times of need, and legal assistance to prosecute perpetrators. Yesterday evening, the House of Representatives also passed a resolution recognizing the 15th anniversary of VAWA.

“Domestic violence is a scourge in this country, one that recognizes no income brackets, no race, no age,” Congresswoman Moore said on the floor. “Earlier this week, I joined my constituents in Wisconsin for the fourth annual Bride’s Walk [in Milwaukee]. We donned wedding dresses and marched through the streets of Milwaukee calling attention to the violent murder of Gladys Ricart. She was in the process of handing her bouquet to her maid of honor eight years ago in New York when a former lover burst in and killed her in her wedding dress.

“Domestic violence is not a private matter. Domestic violence against a partner or child –whether physical or mental – is not OK. On this anniversary, I urge my colleagues to recommit themselves once again to ending this injustice in our country.”

To see the video of Congresswoman Moore speaking about the 15th anniversary of the Violence Against Women Act, click here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j26QDbzdTao>

Last week, Congresswoman Moore introduced a bipartisan House resolution to commemorate the fourth annual Milwaukee Bride’s Walk, which she participated in Sunday to promote awareness of domestic violence issues in the Latino community and to honor those victims whose lives have been cut short as a result of domestic violence. The Bride’s Walk began in New York more than eight years ago in memory of Gladys Ricart, who was brutally murdered by an abusive ex-boyfriend on her wedding day as she was handing a floral bouquets to her maid of honor.

A photograph of Congresswoman Moore in the Milwaukee Bride’s Walk is attached.

The first Bride's Walk was spearheaded by Josie Ashton, a domestic violence advocate who put on her wedding dress and began a 1,600 mile march down the East Coast from New York. Every year women across the country now participate in walks – dressed as brides – to remember Gladys Ricart and to protest domestic violence.

According to the Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Wisconsin domestic abuse programs provided services to 28,655 women, 8,915 children and 3,103 men in 2007. In Milwaukee alone, a total of 7,656 people were served that year.

Moore's Work on Domestic Violence Issues

- Just recently, Congresswoman Moore was able to get \$200,000 for the Milwaukee Family Justice Center to help provide domestic violence victims with the comprehensive support, legal advice, and safety services they need.
- Earlier this month, Congresswoman Moore announced that Legal Action of Wisconsin will be able to work with partner organizations to create the Exceptional Needs Victims' Legal Assistance Program, which will reach out to domestic violence victims in Milwaukee with more far-ranging needs. These needs might include limited English proficiency, disabilities, or an income that is less than 200% of the federal poverty level. This project will create two full time attorney positions and one paralegal position.
- In June, the United States House of Representatives passed an amendment that Congresswoman Moore offered to increase funding for legal assistance to victims of domestic violence. The amendment would add \$4 million to the Civil Legal Assistance Program, which provides legal representation for domestic violence victims so they are able to obtain restraining orders, win custody of their children, and navigate the complex and expensive criminal justice system. The amendment was included in the House-passed Fiscal Year 2010 Commerce, Science, Justice Appropriations Act. That bill is currently pending in the Senate.
- Congresswoman Moore secured \$100,000 in the Labor-HHS appropriations bill that passed in the House earlier this year for the Latina Resource Center's work in teen pregnancy and STD prevention, as well as healthy teen relationships free of emotional and physical abuse. This bill is now pending in the Senate. Of all the domestic violence advocates in the area, the Latina

Resource Center is the only supportive services center in Milwaukee that specifically targets Hispanic women.

- Congresswoman Moore is currently working on legislation to reauthorize the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA). This bill is responsible for funding domestic violence shelters to keep their lights on and their doors open. It was last updated in 2003, and it is sorely in need of more current funding mechanisms and reporting requirements so the federal government can streamline the dollars it sends to local groups that are doing work on the ground. The bill will also expand the types of services these groups can offer in order to reach a broader constituency.

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